

U.S. Serial No. 09/900,368
Office Communication Dated: 02/23/2005
Family Number: P1999J003 US2

- 3 -

REMARKS

The Office Action of February 23, 2005 has been received and reviewed. This response is directed to that action. A two-month extension of time to respond is respectfully requested, and the Office is hereby authorized to charge Deposit Account 05-330 for any fees now due.

Applicants have amended claims 1 and 19-22. Support for these amendments can be found on pages 8-9 of the specification, Figure 2, and originally filed claim 6.

Claim Rejections - 35 U.S.C. § 102

The Examiner rejected claims 1 and 19-22 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as anticipated by Isaksson et al (US 5,443,806). Isaksson teaches a filter device having a plurality of hollow tubular filter elements disposed on a hollow manifold, a hollow filtrate conduit, and a filter tube having a permeable wall. The filter of Isaksson is used to filter gas in a pressurized fluidized bed reactor.

A prima facie case under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) requires that a reference explicitly or inherently disclose all of the elements of a claim. In the present case, claim 1, as amended, relates to a slurry reactor having a filter device used to filter liquid from solids. Isaksson discloses a fluidized bed reactor having a filter device used to filter gas from solids. A slurry reactor is very different from a fluidized bed reactor in both composition and the chemistry that takes place within the reactor.

A slurry reactor comprises three phases, wherein the gas bubbled into the reactor suspends the solid catalyst particles in the liquid. Conversely, the fluidized bed of Isaksson is a two-phase system wherein the gas fluidizes particulate solids. Therefore, because the present claim is directed to a slurry reactor and Isaksson is directed to a fluidized bed reactor, Isaksson does not disclose all the elements of claim 1 and the

U.S. Serial No. 09/900,368
Office Communication Dated: 02/23/2005
Family Number: P1999J003 US2

- 4 -

prima facie case for novelty fails. Applicants respectfully request this rejection be withdrawn.

Moreover, in anticipation of a rejection based on 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) in view of Isaksson or similar art, the Applicants contend that the present invention is nonobvious over the prior art because a person of skill in the art would not be motivated to apply the teachings of the fluidized bed reactor of Isaksson to a slurry reactor. Specifically, Isaksson's reactor reduces nitrogen oxides to N_2 in the presence of NH_4 (see col. 2, lines 25-28). On the other hand, the reduction of nitrogen oxides would be illogical in a slurry bed.

Applicants believe the claims are patentable and are in condition for allowance, and such favorable action is respectfully requested. If any further issues remain, the resolution of which can be handled by a conference, the Examiner is invited to contact the Applicants' attorney at the number listed below.

Respectfully submitted,



Mark D. Marin
Attorney for Applicants
Registration No. 50,842
Telephone Number: (908) 730-3271
Facsimile Number: (908) 730-3649

☒ Pursuant to 37 CFR 1.34(a)

ExxonMobil Research and Engineering Company
P. O. Box 900
Annandale, New Jersey 08801-0900

MDM:kak
7/8/2005